This is in addition to the facility/option of exercising their vote through postal ballot.

Misuse of POTA

2275. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any representation from the Members of Parliament to prevent the misuse of POTA;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) whether it is proposed to make suitable amendments in POTA to prevent the use of its provisions for political vendetta and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (c) No formal representation has been made by any Member of Parliament citing any particular case in which Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002 (POTA) has been misused. However, apprehensions were expressed by some Members of Parliament about possible misuse of POTA at the time of consideration of the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002 in the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha as well as in the Joint sitting of the two Houses. In the context of arrest of MDMK leader Shri Vaiko, some Members have again raised the issue of misuse of POTA in the Parliament.

Since necessary safeguards are available in the Act against its possible misuse, no change is contemplated in the provisions of POTA.

Proposal to include Dogri in the Eighth Schedule

2276. MIRZA ABDUL RASHID: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to reply to Unstarred Question 661 given in the Rajya Sabha on 6th March, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a Bill, to include Dogri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, during the current session of Parliament; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE INTHE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) The text of this question refers to reply given on 6th March, 2002 to Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 661. Perhaps the Hon'ble Member intended to refer to his Unstarred Question No. 2561 replied on the 17th April, 2002.

At present demands for inclusion of as many as 32 more languages (including Dogri) in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India are pending with the Government. The Government have decided that a suitable criteria needs to be evolved for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule as no criteria has been laid down in the Constitution of India.

The issue of evolving criteria for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule was referred to the "National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution" for consideration. The National Commission has since submitted its report to the Government but the National Commission have not made any recommendations on this issue. Therefore, it has been decided by the Government to constitute a High Powered Body for laying down a criteria for inclusion of additional languages in the Eighth Schedule. The question of inclusion of more languages including Dogri in the Eighth Schedule would be considered in accordance with the criteria so evolved.

De-silting operations by MCD

2277. PROF. R. B. S. VARMA:
SHRIMATI S. G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a larger number of Government quarters in Sector-7, R. K. Puram, New Delhi were flooded with rain water on 29th May, 2002 due to non-de-silting of storm-water drains and non-laying of new drain pipes in the area;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether de-silting operations of MCD have not been undertaken in the area for many years and the plan to lay new drain-pipes have not been initiated leading to water logging and drain water overflowing throughout the year; and